

# DRAMAFEST

## **An Exciting Opportunity for Stagedoor Manor Students Who Are Interested in Writing for the Stage!**

In 1981, Stephen Sondheim founded an organization called Young Playwrights Inc. His goal was to discover and nurture young writing talent for the stage. Stagedoor Manor, in conjunction with Young Playwrights Inc., is excited to offer our students an opportunity to PRODUCE AND PUBLISH their original work!

**Stagedoor Manor DRAMAFEST is a playwriting competition within the Stagedoor community, open to all ages, all three sessions. DRAMAFEST concludes with a one-day event, each session, during which 5 original 10-minute scripts are performed for a full student audience and invited industry guests.**

The 5 scripts are jury-chosen from entries received and read before the student arrives. Winners are announced on the day the cast lists go up, and student playwrights spend the next 10 days working with a dramaturg and stage manager to mount (and potentially direct) their own shows.

The competition is open to ALL ages on an equal basis. It is a new competition EACH session. While participation in DRAMAFEST will not affect primary shows, it does replace two classes in your student's schedule.

**The 5 winners from all three sessions will have their work (with photos from each production) published in a collection.**

Special invited guests who have attended previously include: Tony winner, Richard Maltby; Tony winner, Jeff Whitty; Broadway director, Gordon Greenberg; President Board of Directors Young Playwrights, Janet Brenner; Award winning author, Arlene Hutton; Tony-nominated lyricist, Jeff Blumenkrantz; Award winning director, Eric Nightengale; General Manager of Manhattan Theatre Club, Florence Seery.

**We encourage ALL interested students to take advantage of this unique opportunity!**

See your original characters and words brought to life! You, the playwright, will produce (and possibly direct) your show in the beautiful Oasis Theater for an audience of over 300!

Your original script with production photos will be published!

**Please read the following rules and entry deadlines:**

# DRAMAFEST GUIDELINES

The goal of DRAMAFEST is to give young writers the opportunity to experience the thrill of seeing their work come to life on stage. Student performers will share in the excitement and all will benefit from the challenge of creating a finished product in a limited time frame. Professionals are there to guide them and facilitate the process. The competition is open to all ages with a new competition each session.

1. **Material must be the original work of the author, previously unpublished.** No collaborations, adaptations, screenplays, or musicals will be considered.
2. **The play must run (produced) no longer than 10 minutes and have no more than 5 characters.** Less than 10 minutes, less than 5 characters is OK.
3. **Subject matter and language must be suitable for all ages of audience.** Final five choices will be made by Stagedoor Manor directors and administration.
4. **You may submit as many scripts as you like, but only ONE may be a winner.** Those students who are staying more than one session, and are **NOT** winners in their first session can have their submitted scripts considered for the following session.
5. **Authors may not perform in their own productions as they may be directing it.** If you do not wish to direct your own show, we will attempt to find a suitable director. Please indicate when you submit whether you would like to direct it yourself or have someone else we choose direct. Your choice will have no effect on your chances of your script being chosen. Student actors may perform in only one production per session.
6. **Please include a brief description of each of your characters with your submission.** Although you can include physical aspects that are important to the story, focus less on the physical (tall, blonde, short) and more on relevant emotional characteristics (quirky sense-of-humor; moody; quick with a smile; intense) and relationships (Bob's younger sister; older than Jennifer; Sarah's reluctant boyfriend, etc.)
7. **Scripts MUST be emailed or snail mailed NO LATER than the postmark date for each session!** If submitting by snail mail, scripts must be typed, stapled, and have clearly numbered pages.
8. **THE NAME OF THE AUTHOR SHOULD NOT APPEAR ON THE SCRIPT!** Only the title will be used to identify the material for final 5 selections. Your name and return address must be on the script's mailing envelope or in the submitted email.

## **EMAIL YOUR SCRIPT TO:**

Dramafest@stagedoormanor.com

## **OR PHYSICALLY MAIL YOUR SCRIPT TO:**

Stagedoor Manor  
Attention: Dramafest  
15 Stagedoor Drive  
Loch Sheldrake, NY 12759

# D R A M A F E S T

## **POSTMARK / EMAIL SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR 2019**

### **Session 1:**

Postmarked/Emailed  
by June 3rd

### **Session 2:**

Postmarked/Emailed  
by June 24th

### **Session 3:**

Postmarked/Emailed  
by July 15th

Ten-Minute plays are meant to be performed with bare minimal production detail. If your script requires a specific costume or prop for production, be prepared to have it sent from home. Dramafest is performed “in the round” in the Oasis Theater. Sets will consist of chairs, a table, or blocks and little else. Lights will have minimal changes as well. Casting of shows will be done with the help of the Stagedoor casting team...please do not pre-cast your show with friends! They may find their schedule prevents them from participation.

DRAMAFEST rehearsals will take place during the third period class of each day, so you will be giving up one class period every day if your show is selected. Your actors will also be required to give up some class time. More details will be available when you arrive at Stagedoor. You will be working independently, but supervised by a director and stage manager who will guide you and make suggestions along the way. Please be sure of all the rules and deadlines listed above!

## **STANDARDS OF SELECTION**

### **Entries will be read with the following criteria in mind:**

**PLOT:** How is the story structured? Developed? Does action build? Is there a beginning, a middle, and a resolution?

**CHARACTERS:** Are they defined? Do they grow and change? Do they have needs or goals that propel the action of the play? Do they have relationships within the story?

**DIALOGUE:** Is it consistent to the individual characters? Bring them to life?

**CONFLICT:** Does it drive the play? Challenge the characters? Create tension and give purpose to the plot?

**DRAMATIC PREMISE AND ORIGINALITY:** Is there a core theme to the play? Did the playwright deliver his message? Is the approach fresh? The style original?

**REMEMBER, a script needs a story with a purpose:** A Beginning, Middle, and a Resolution.

## **SOME WRITING ADVICE:**

**Characters need Objectives.** We want to meet people we find interesting and challenging. We may relate to them, or find them totally foreign, but we want to discover what makes them tick. We want to experience a growth, change, or revelation with them.

**There is a difference between a story and a skit.** A skit usually takes a situation, or group of people, we all recognize and makes it bigger than life in a humorous way. Think “Saturday Night Live.” We already know the situation and are affirming our knowledge by sharing the laugh. Write a story, not a skit.

**There is a difference between telling a story and exposing a conflict.** Have you ever been an audience to one of those endless arguments between people who are on opposite sides? There will be no winner or loser...just an airing of their points of view? Conflict is essential to a story, but if there is no change or resolution to the conflict, we soon lose interest.

**If you are going to tell a story of pain and loss,** then you must also tell the story of how your characters coped with the pain and loss; how they survived, persevered, or changed. What influenced their journey or how did the journey affect others? Where did they start? Where are they going? Most important, why should WE care? What message are you wanting to send?

**BEST ADVICE: Know the ending BEFORE you write the beginning.** Think your work through first, and spend some time drafting your ideas before sitting down to write. Spend time with your characters and question their motives, test their relationships, discover their goals.

**AND MOST OF ALL...HAVE FUN!!!**

**QUESTIONS? SEND AN EMAIL TO:**

**[Dramafest@stagedoormanor.com](mailto:Dramafest@stagedoormanor.com)**